

Another Word July 5, 2022

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

What a spectacular way to end our Fourth of July celebration! A beautiful night, the front lawn filled with people, ice cream, and fireworks! We want to thank all who contributed popsicles, ice cream bars, and water. And a big thanks to all who came out to help make all our visitors feel welcomed! It was indeed a special night.

I think it's time to dust off the third book in our Bible series, "The Art of Living" by Henri Nouwen, and get studying again. The book, "Suffering, Transforming our Pain" will be the next 5 week study. Classes will begin Tuesday, July 19th, and again, there will be two times available. 10:30 am and 6pm. A signup sheet will be posted in the gathering area. I have a couple of extra books, and large print is available if needed. Hope to see you there.

A number of you have asked when we might begin outdoor services. With the daily construction and truck traffic that stirs up large amounts of dirt that falls in and around the pavilion, we feel that until construction eases, it is safer (and cleaner) to worship inside.

Our scriptures for July 10th are Psalm 82, and Acts 10: 34-43. Todd Whitmer is our serving Elder. Then for July 17th our scriptures will be Psalm 52 and Acts 11: 19-30. Lana Bell, Elder.

As we enter into prayer, please remember John Whitmer, Alice Baker, Molly Henderson, Mary Bee, and the people of Highland Park, Illinois as they grieve the loss of families and friends.

May we pray. Dear gracious God. You are our strength and our guide. Our lives, just when they seem to be going smoothly, can turn quickly, and become chaotic and harsh. But because of your love and direction, we can and will be able to weather any storm life can bring. From confusion, health, or loss, you stand with us. At times of pain you allow us to lean on you. In times of suffering, grief, and loss, when all our strength is gone, you will even stand for us. You, and you alone are what we can always count on, rely on, and take comfort in. We thank you for your love and daily provision. And we thank you for your greatest gift of all, the gift of salvation through your son, Jesus. Please accept our prayers for all those in need (Personal prayers). We raise these prayers to all that is Holy, Amen

Back in the early 90's Donita and I led a youth group. One summer we took them for a trip to Cedar Point. Imagine 30 teens set loose in a 100 plus acre amusement park! Help! We need chaperones! One of our volunteers was a gentleman in his mid 80's.

About 2 in the afternoon, he and I found ourselves standing at the entrance of The Blue Streak roller coaster. Looking up, he said, "I remember when this was constructed. I rode it when it was brand new." I looked at him and said, "Are you up to riding it again?" He thought for a moment, got a smile on his face, a gleam in his eye, then answered, "Yeah, let's go!" To this day, I can't tell you who whooped and hollered more; him or me!

Roller coasters can give you a ride of a lifetime. A lot of ups and downs, twists and turns, thrills and chills. If you think about it, a roller coaster is

quite a perfect metaphor for life. We all have experienced ups and downs, successes and failures, even loss and gain. The question is, what keeps us safe in a sometimes violent, brutal, and out of control world?

In a roller coaster, what keeps you safe is that the car is attached to the track. If it wasn't, you would careen out of control and crash. It's the same with our lives. We need to be attached to someone who will protect us from running out of control and crashing. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:16, "We were created by Him and for Him." Of course, Paul is referring to Jesus. So, maybe we should let Him run the life that He gave us so we can "live for Him." In other words, Jesus is the track of life we should be attached to.

Too many people try to live their lives by themselves. But, without a track to guide them, their lives will ultimately spiral out of control. So, what is the answer? I think the writer of Hebrews says it perfectly when he writes, that with Jesus, "you have an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19. (That sounds like a track we can count on.)

Regardless of how steep the hill, how deep the valley, or how tight and scary the twists and turns of life may be, just remember, that with Jesus as your guiding track, you will assuredly be brought home, safe and secure.

In His Peace,

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